



Media Advisory

March 30, 2009

Contacts:	Elissa Lynn, Senior Meteorologist	(916) 574-2221
	Don Strickland, Information Officer	(916) 653-9515
	Ted Thomas, Information Officer	(916) 653-9712
	Frank Gehrke, Snow Surveys Office	(916) 952-4044
	Cell phone on survey day	
	Amy Norris, Information Officer	(916) 654-3755

DWR Schedules Fourth Snow Survey of 2008-2009 Season

SACRAMENTO---The California Department of Water Resources (DWR) will conduct its fourth snow survey of the season at 11 a.m., Thursday, April 2, 2009, near Lake Tahoe.

Survey Location and Results

Phillips Station at Highway 50 and Sierra at Tahoe Road, about 90 miles east of Sacramento, is the manual survey location. Reporters and photographers should bring snowshoes or cross-country skis and park vehicles along Highway 50.

Snow depth and water content figures should be available by 1 pm. This survey is the fourth of five monthly measurements that help water supply planners estimate the amount of spring snowmelt runoff into reservoirs.

Water Supply Threats

Water storage in several major reservoirs remains below average, though late winter storms provided sufficient precipitation to allow a slight increase in State Water Project allocations, from 15 percent to 20 percent. In this third consecutive dry year, drought conditions are a threat to California's economy and quality of life. Conservation is a necessity to maximize use of 2009 water supplies.

Besides dry conditions, regulatory restrictions to protect native fish species have a significant

impact on SWP deliveries.

Regardless of Sierra snow conditions, water deliveries through the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta will remain in jeopardy because of regulatory factors. DWR continues to work toward a comprehensive solution that must include additional water storage and alternate conveyance. These measures would increase water supply reliability for farms and businesses and benefit fisheries. Alternate conveyance would allow water deliveries, while avoiding pumping hazards to the most vulnerable fish species.

Importance of Snow Surveying

Snow water content is important in determining the coming year's water supply. The measurements help hydrologists prepare water supply forecasts as well as provide others, such as hydroelectric power companies and the recreation industry, with needed data.

Monitoring is coordinated by DWR as part of the multi-agency California Cooperative Snow Surveys Program. Surveyors from more than 50 agencies and utilities visit hundreds of snow measurement courses in California's mountains to gauge the amount of water in the snowpack.

The Department of Water Resources operates and maintains the State Water Project, provides dam safety and flood control and inspection services, assists local water districts in water management and water conservation planning, and plans for future statewide water needs.